

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 NEA-09 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 NSC-05

NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 PRS-01 PA-01 CAB-02 CIAE-00

COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00

LAB-04 SIL-01 IO-10 /082 W
----- 065646

O R 041520Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9524

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL MONTREAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 0146

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - E.O. INFORMATION CORRECTED

MONTREAL FOR US ICAO REP

E.O. GDS

TAGS: ETRN

SUBJECT: CIVAIR, PAN AM'S HOSTAGE 747

REF: STATE 00147 (NOTAL)

BANGKOK 0132 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: PAA'S 747 REMAINS STRANDED IN BANGKOK EVENING
JAN 4. HOWEVER, EMBASSY DOING UTMOST TO FREE AIRCRAFT ASAP.

1. SINCE BEING INFORMED ABOUT STRANDED 747 BY PAN AM AT 2000
HOURS JANUARY 3, EMBASSY HAS ATTEMPTED TO DO ITS UTMOST TO
SECURE RELEASE OF AIRCRAFT.

2. FOREIGN OFFICE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS SAKON
WANNAPHRIK, WHO WAS DINNER GUEST OF AMBASSADOR JANUARY 3,
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CALLED DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF DEPT OF LABOR WHO IMMEDIATELY

WENT TO AIRPORT WHICH RESULTED IN LATE NIGHT MEETING AT AIRPORT WITH PAN AM AND STRIKING WORKERS.

3. DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN PAN AM AND STRIKING WORKERS AND LABOR OFFICIALS CONTINUED AT LABOR MINISTRY JANUARY 4. IN ADDITION, THROUGHOUT DAY JANUARY 4, PAN AM REP LAYTON, KEPT EMBASSY APPRISED OF STATUS OF TALKS. HE SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED THAT EMBASSY TAKE NO UNILATERAL ACTION SINCE HE BELIEVED CHANCES WERE GOOD HE COULD SECURE RELEASE OF AIRCRAFT. HOWEVER, AS LATER REPORTED BY LAYTON, DURING TALKS WORKERS KEPT UPPING DEMANDS AND THE BEST HE COULD ARRANGE WAS AGREEMENTS FOR REMOVAL OF BAGGAGE FROM STRANDED AIRCRAFT.

4. AT 1600 HOURS JANUARY 4, LAYTON ADMITTED HIS EFFORTS FUTILE AND ASKED FOR EMBASSY ASSISTANCE SECURE RELEASE AIRCRAFT. FOLLOWING ACTIONS TAKEN: (A) DR. SIRALAK CHANDRANGSU, UNDERSECRETARY OF MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS, REACHED AT HIS HOME AT 1615 RELUCTANTLY AGREED INVESTIGATE MATTER. WE EMPHASIZED TO HIM PLANE WAS BEING HELD ILLEGALLY AND PAN AM HAD INFORMED US NEGOTIATIONS ON WORKERS' DEMANDS COULD NOT BEGIN UNTIL PLANE RELEASED. SIRALAK SUBSEQUENTLY CONTENTED AIRCRAFT IS BEING DETAINED BY WORKERS, NOT BY RTG, AND THAT EMBASSY SHOULD THEREFORE ADDRESS ITSELF TO DON MUANG AIRPORT AUTHORITIES WHO, HE NOTED, ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR CONDUCT OF OPERATIONS AT AIRPORT. (B) PHAEN WANNAMETHI, UNDERSECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, PROMISED THAT HE WOULD INFORM THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND SPEAK WITH THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE LABOR DEPARTMENT THE EVENING OF JANUARY 4.

5. BANGKOK AIRPORT IS UNDER OPERATIONAL AND SECURITY CONTROL OF THE ROYAL THAI AIR FORCE. AMBASSADOR KINTNER REQUESTED THAT BRIG. GEN. ADERHOLD, USAF, DEPUTY COMMANDER, MACTHAI, INTERVENE WITH THE RTAF HIERARCHY. GENERAL ADERHOLD CONTACTED THE RTAF COMMANDER, AIR CHIEF MARSHAL KAMON, AND CIVIL AIRPORT DIRECTOR, VICE MARSHAL SAWAI, AND BOTH DECLINED TO TAKE ANY ACTION TO REMOVE EQUIPMENT AND STRIKING PERSONNEL UNLESS ORDERED TO DO SO BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OR HIGHER AUTHORITY. THEIR RATIONALE WAS THE RESULT OF AIR CHIEF MARSHAL BUNCHU'S (RECENTLY RETIRED RTAF COMMANDER), AND CONFIDENTIAL

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THE RTAF SECURITY POLICE ROLE IN THE RETURN LAST WEEK OF THANOM KITTIKACHORN. THEIR ACTIONS RESULTED IN ADVERSE PRESS AND SEVERE CRITICISM FOR THE RTAF WHICH CONSEQUENTLY LED TO A RELUCTANCE TO GET INVOLVED IN THIS INCIDENT.

6. WE HAVE NOT YET SEEN COPY OF GRIEVANCE LETTER SENT TO LAYTON BY PAN AM WORKERS, BUT UNDERSTAND IT INVOLVES ELEVEN

POINT PACKAGE CALLING FOR ADDITIONAL PAY, DAILY AIRPORT TRAVEL ON EXPENSE ALLOWANCES, AND FOURTEEN DAY ANNUAL VACATION. LAYTON INDICATED PAN AM'S SALARY SCALE AND OTHER BENEFITS IN "MIDDLE RANGE" OF AIRLINES OPERATING IN BANGKOK, AND HIS COMPANY HAD REFUSED TO COMPETE AS MANY NEW AIRLINES WERE DOING BY OFFERING UNREALISTIC AND OVERLY LIBERAL WAGE SCALES.

7. AT DAY'S END PAA'S 747 REMAINED ENCIRCLED BY PAA TRUCKS, TRACTORS, STARTERS AND OTHER GROUND EQUIPMENT WHILE APPROXIMATELY 100 STRIKING EMPLOYEES GOSSIPED AMICABLY IN GROUPS UNDER THE WINGS. THERE HAS BEEN NO VIOLENCE, NOR IS ANY THREATENED.

8. PAN AM LABOR NEGOTIATOR FROM NEW YORK (LEONARD) AND PAN AM REGIONAL DIRECTOR FROM HONG KONG (COWDEN) WILL ARRIVE HERE SUNDAY MORNING TO DISCUSS DETAILS WITH WORKERS.

9. WE ARE TRYING TO REACH DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PRAKOP HUTASING AS WELL AS GEN. KRIT SIWARA. IT IS EVIDENT FROM THE LAST FEW HOURS THAT BOTH MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS OF RTG ARE RELUCTANT TO ASSUME ANY RESPONSIBILITY IN THIS DELICATE LABOR-MANAGEMENT DISPUTE IN THE FEW WEEKS REMAINING IN THE LIFE OF THIS GOVERNMENT WHICH IS WEAK AND IN DISARRAY. NONETHELESS, WE THINK IT IMPORTANT TO IMPRESS ON RTG THAT ISSUE INVOLVES NATIONAL INTERESTS AND TO THUS IMPEL RTG MAKE UNCHARACTERISTIC (FOR MOMENT) INTERVENTION.
KINTNER

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